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THE REMONSTRANCE.

BOSTON, FEBRUARY, 1890.

WYOMING AS AN EXAMPLE.

THE suffragists are making much of Wyoming as an example. It seems to be the only ray of light which the situation affords them. Wyoming, they say, has tried woman suffrage for twenty years, and is so satisfied with its workings that it eagerly embraces the opportunity to embody it in its proposed State Constitution. The news is hailed with so much effusiveness and proclaimed as so great a triumph that one might suppose that Wyoming had already acquired the dignity of Statehood, and the experiment of feminine participation in national politics were already inaugurated.

The extraordinary prominence thus given to Wyoming makes it pertinent to examine the community whose example is held up for general imitation. What is Wyoming, and how extended an experiment is it from which such sweeping conclusions have been drawn? Twenty years ago, when the women began to vote in Wyoming, the entire population of that territory, men, women, and children, was 9,118. If the ratio of the sexes and of ages was the same as exhibited in the census of 1880, and there seems to be no reason to suppose the contrary, the whole number of women of twenty-one years and over, and thus entitled to vote, was about 900. This handful of women voters was scattered over a territory having more than twelve times the area of the State of Massachusetts. At the census of 1880 the population of Wyoming was 20,789, of which number only 6,637 were females. It is significant that, of the entire male population at that date, almost exactly five-sevenths, or, to be precise, 10,180 out of 14,152, were of voting age. Of females of twenty-one years and over there were less than 2,000. The present population of the territory is a matter of estimate more or less colored by statehood ambitions. At the election in 1888, however, the total vote cast was 18,008. We have the authority of an active woman suffrage leader, Mrs. Lillie Devereux Blake, in The Woman's Journal for January 4, for the statement that "men cast seven times as many votes as women" in Wyoming. Accepting this statement, it would appear that the women voters of the territory numbered, so recently as 1888, only about 2,250.

Some consideration of these facts is necessary, if the example of Wyoming is to count for what it is worth and no more. When they are duly weighed it will be seen that to cite an experiment tried among a few women in a sparsely settled territory, as an example for the nation, is very much as if we should urge the adoption of some local custom, practised in the little Massachusetts town of Gosnold or Tisbury, as necessarily a good thing for Boston or New York.

SUFFRAGE AT A STANDSTILL IN CANADA.

THERE are no signs of an extension of woman suffrage in the provinces of the Dominion, where women have a very limited opportunity to vote. The efforts which were made, last year, to remove some of the existing restrictions were all unsuccessful. In the New Brunswick House of Assembly, April 3, a resolution was introduced, qualifying all widows and spinsters holding real estate worth $400, or assessed upon incomes of $400, to vote for members of the Assembly. An amendment was offered, extending the suffrage to every woman, 21 years old, and a British subject. April 4, the amendment was defeated, 11 yeas to 26 nays. The resolution also was lost, 14 yeas to 24 nays.

In the Province of Ontario, all women may vote at school elections, and single women and widows exercise the municipal franchise. Last spring, a bill was introduced in the Ontario Assembly, to give unmarried women and widows the right to vote at provincial elections. It was defeated by a vote of 22 yeas to 56 nays. Subsequently, a motion was made to extend to married women the municipal franchise, on the same conditions as to unmarried women and widows. The motion, however, was withdrawn. In British Columbia, where single women and widows have had municipal suffrage for some years, a proposition before the local Parliament to make them eligible to municipal offices was defeated, yeas 5, nays 6.

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GOLDWIN SMITH ON SUFFRAGE.

PROFESSOR Goldwin Smith's clear and vigorous statement of the case against woman suffrage, in The Forum for January, derives special interest from the fact that the writer, thirty years ago, in company with John Bright, signed John Stuart Mill's petition for the political enfranchisement of women. Both afterward changed their minds; Mr. Bright became the most powerful opponent of woman suffrage, and Professor Smith, influenced in part by the fact that the best representatives of the sex among his acquaintances were opposed to the change, has come to regard the suffrage movement with strong disapproval.

Professor Smith reviews, in a very caustic and effective way, the favorable report of the Senate Committee on Woman Suffrage. To the declaration that suffrage is a natural right he replies that what is essential to the republican form of government can be gathered only by induction from a survey of such republics as have existed; and of all the republics which have existed not one has given a share of the sovereign power or a part in government to women. If government requires a masculine understanding or temperament, and if the practical character by which political questions are likely to be best settled resides in the man whose sphere is the world, rather than in the woman whose sphere is home, there is a reason for preferring such government and legislation, quite independent of any invidious comparisons, whether intellectual or moral. Why has the male sex alone made the laws? Because law, with whatever majesty we may invest it, is will, which, to give it effect, must be backed by force: and the force of the community is male. That the tendency of a state governed by women would be to arbitrary and sentimental legislation can hardly be doubted. The women of France some years ago would probably have voted a war for the support of the temporal power of the Pope. The women of England might have voted intervention in favor of the Queen of Naples. In both cases the men would have refused

to march or act, and government would have succumbed. As to the supposed elevating influence of women upon politics, Professor Smith says: —

"The belief that women will impart their tenderness and purity to politics is surely somewhat simple. They are tender and pure, because their sphere has hitherto been the home, which is the abode of tenderness and purity. Thrown into the arena of political strife, the 'angels,' if experience may be trusted, instead of imparting the angelic character to the male combatants, would be in danger of losing it themselves. In the desperate party conflict which has been raging in England, each party has put its women in requisition as canvassers on a large scale; and we are misinformed if the result has been the infusion of a more angelic character into the fray."

If women were a class without votes, their class interests might suffer. But they are not a class, but a sex. What special interest of women can be named which is in danger of suffering at the hands of a legislature composed of their husbands, sons, and brothers? Not only are the lives, liberties, and properties of American women secure, but they are more secure, if anything, than those of the men. Alluding to the privileges now enjoyed by women, Professor Smith asks this pertinent question: —

"Do the woman's rights party expect to combine the prerogatives of both sexes, and to have equality and privilege too? For a time perhaps they might, while the ancient sentiment lingered; but the total change of relations would in the end bring a corresponding change of feeling. Chivalry depends on the acknowledged end of protection, and what is accorded to a gentle helpmate would not be accorded to a rival. Man would neither be inclined nor bound to treat with tenderness and forbearance the being who was fighting and jostling him in all his walks of life, wrangling with him in the law courts, wrestling with him on the stump, manœuvring against him in elections, haggling against him in Wall Street, and perhaps encountering him on the race course and in the betting ring. But when woman has lost her privilege, what will she be but a weaker man?"

Of a certain extraordinary threat which was made by one of the active suffrage leaders last year, Professor Smith observes in closing: —

"One lady in her evidence warns Congress, if it will not give way, that the wild enthusiasm of women can be used for evil as well as good, and threatens in America a repetition of the scenes of the French Commune. More terrible even than this menace is the fear of doing an injury to man's partner, and thereby a deeper injury to man himself. . . . To man, as he alone could enforce the law, the sovereign power came naturally and righteously. Let him see whether he cannot make a just use of it, in the interest of his wife and children as well as in his own, before he sends in his resignation."

A VITAL DIFFERENCE.

The suffragists, when they press municipal suffrage bills upon American Legislatures, point to England and the British dependencies as examples of liberality in this direction. But they are careful not to call attention to the fact that the British form of municipal suffrage is something very different from what is asked in America. As exercised by women in England, municipal suffrage is limited to women who are unmarried and are property-owners, or rate-payers to the amount of ten pounds per annum. Municipal suffrage, as exercised by women in Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Manitoba, is also limited to single women and widows who are property-owners or taxpayers. A little reflection will suggest how small a proportion of the women in any of our communities would be permitted to vote, if the grant were limited to taxpaying widows and spinsters, as in England. But it is suffrage without such restrictions which is asked for here, and for that experiment there is no precedent in any other country.

WOMEN ON COUNTY COUNCILS IN ENGLAND.

An interesting question arose in England last year, as to the right of women to sit as members of the newly established county councils. Two women, Lady Sandhurst and Mrs. Cobden, were elected in London and both took seats and voted. Lady Sandhurst was made an Alderman. The candidate next below her on the poll petitioned for her seat on the ground that as a woman she had no right to it. The Court of Appeals sustained the contestant, and Lady Sandhurst was excluded. The matter was then brought before Parliament, in a bill introduced by Lord Meath, qualifying women to be members of county councils. The House of Lords, without debate, rejected the bill by a vote of 23 yeas to 108 nays.

THE ENGLISH REMONSTRANCE.

The most noteworthy contribution to the literature of the suffrage question last year was the Remonstrance printed in The Nineteenth Century for June, and signed by a large number of women who are well known on both sides of the Atlantic. Among the signers were Mrs. Humphrey Ward, Lady Randolph Churchill, Mrs. Goschen, Mrs. Leslie Stephen, Mrs. Frederic Harrison, Mrs. Huxley, Mrs. Matthew Arnold, Mrs. W. E. Forster, Mrs. Max Müller, Lady Monteagle, Lady Frederick Cavendish, the Duchess of St. Albans, and other leaders in social and literary circles.

The signers of this remonstrance expressed their desire for the fullest possible development of the powers, energies, and education of women, and their conviction that their work for the state and their responsibilities toward it must always differ from those of men, and that therefore their share in the working of the state machinery should be different from that assigned to men. They said: —

"To sum up: we would give them their full share in the state of social effort and social mechanism; we look for their increasing activity in that higher state which rests on thought, conscience, and moral influence; but we protest against their admission to direct power in that state which *does* rest upon force — the state in its administrative, military, and financial aspects — where the physical capacity, the accumulated experience and inherited training of men ought to prevail without the harassing interference of those who, though they may be partners with men in debate, can in these matters never be partners with them in action."

As to the claim that the influence of women in politics would tend upon the side of morality, the signers claimed that it does so tend already, but that it is dependent upon those qualities of sympathy and disinterestedness which it would be extremely difficult to maintain in the heat of party struggle. If the quickness of feeling, which is one of the peculiar excellencies of women, should be immediately translated into public action, in matters of grave importance, the risks of politics would be enormously increased. As to the injustices of the law toward women, most of these have been removed during the past half-century, and the growing sensitiveness to the claims of women affords reason to believe that such as remain will also be removed. The Remonstrance concluded thus: —

"Nothing can be further from our minds than to seek to depreciate the position or the importance of women. It is because we are keenly alive to the enormous value of their special contribution to the community that we oppose what seems to us likely to endanger that contribution. We are convinced that the pursuit of a mere outward equality with men is for women not only vain but demoralizing. It leads to a total misconception of woman's true dignity and special mission. It tends to personal struggle and rivalry, where the only effort of both the great divisions of the human family should be to contribute the characteristic labor and the best gifts of each to the common stock."

SUFFRAGE DISAPPOINTMENTS IN NEW ENGLAND.

THE last Legislative year was a disappointing one to New England advocates of woman suffrage. With the exception of Rhode Island, the effort was made in every state to secure some form of suffrage. In Vermont, expectations were kindled by the fact that the House, two years previous, had passed a municipal suffrage bill. A similar bill was reported to the House, at the last session, without recommendation, and after an animated debate, continued two days, was rejected by an overwhelming vote, 37 yeas to 192 nays.

In Maine, there was an exciting contest over a bill to confer municipal suffrage upon women. Petitions for the bill were met by remonstrances against it signed by large numbers of women. One remonstrance from Portland was signed by 350 ladies, another by 600, and one from Bangor by 500. The bill was defeated in the House, February 27: 42 yeas to 90 nays. It was afterward rejected by the Senate, yeas 9, nays 17.

In New Hampshire, the Constitutional Convention gave the petitioners for a woman suffrage amendment to the Constitution, "leave to withdraw." The Legislature referred the petitions for municipal suffrage for women to the next General Court.

In Connecticut, an amendment to strike the word "male" from the Constitution was defeated in the House, May 14, yeas 44, nays 90. A bill conferring school suffrage upon women was passed by the House, but was killed in the Senate, June 6: 5 yeas, 10 nays. A bill giving women the right to vote upon the license question was passed by the House, but was reconsidered and defeated, June 4: 68 yeas to 103 nays.

In Massachusetts, a municipal suffrage bill was unanimously reported to the House by the Committee on Woman Suffrage, but was defeated, March 12, yeas 78, nays 127, with 12 pairs. A bill to confer license suffrage upon women was reported to the Senate, May 2, and was passed to be engrossed by that body, May 16, yeas 15, nays 12. May 24, the bill was reported to the House, and was referred to the next Legislature by a rising vote of 101 yeas to 42 nays. A reconsideration was refused, 54 yeas to 95 nays, with four pairs.

THE SUFFRAGE WATERLOO IN THE NEW STATE OF WASHINGTON.

IN the long list of suffrage defeats in 1889, none is more complete and humiliating than that which was experienced in the new State of Washington. The women possessed the right to vote in the territory of Washington for five years, until the adverse decision of the Territorial Supreme Court in 1887. The suffragists complained bitterly of this decision, as a violation of the intention of the legislature and the will of the people. The passage by Congress of an enabling act for the admission of Washington as a State gave the suffragists an opportunity, not only to redress the wrong of which they complained, but to embody woman suffrage in the constitution of a state of the Union. They were confident of success.

The struggle began in the Constitutional Convention, August 12, when a motion was made to strike out the word "male" from the suffrage clause of the constitution. On a *viva voce* vote only eight delegates out of seventy-five voted in favor of the amendment. A motion to empower the legislature to confer suffrage upon women was then made, and was lost, yeas 18, noes 38. A motion to give the women municipal suffrage was rejected. A motion was then adopted, providing for the submission of woman suffrage as a separate article, in November, 1890. Three days later, however, this motion was reconsidered, and, in spite of the protests of the suffragists, it was voted to submit the article at the same time with the constitution, October 1, 1889. The next movement of the suffragists was an amendment providing that, if the suffrage article were lost, the legislature should have the power to submit it at any time. This failed, yeas 28, nays 43. A motion to exempt women from taxation received only 18 votes.

The suffragists were greatly disconcerted by the brevity of the interval before the election, but they made a vigorous campaign. The result, however, was that the people who had enjoyed the supposed blessing of woman suffrage, under a Territorial government, for five years, and who had been represented as crying out against its withdrawal, voted, nearly two to one, not to incorporate it in their constitution as a state. From this it would appear that their feelings regarding the institution had been either misunderstood or misrepresented.

A BAD YEAR FOR SUFFRAGE.

AN account is given elsewhere of last year's disappointments to the suffragists in New England. Outside of New England their efforts were not any more fruitful. In California an "equal suffrage" bill reached a vote in the House, where it was defeated. A municipal suffrage bill was strongly supported in the Senate, but failed to secure the required number of votes. A school suffrage bill was passed by the Senate but was tabled in the House.

In Dakota, at the last session of the Territorial Legislature, a bill conferring general suffrage upon women was defeated in the House, January 25: 17 yeas, 28 nays. A municipal suffrage bill was defeated in the House, February 8: 22 yeas, 26 nays. February 27, the bill came up again, this time restricted to taxpaying women, and was again defeated.

In Minnesota, a municipal suffrage bill was defeated.

In Missouri, the House acted favorably at first, upon a bill to confer school suffrage upon women, but, upon reconsideration, the bill was lost, 45 yeas to 75 nays.

In Michigan, a municipal suffrage bill was passed by the House, May 16: 58 yeas, 34 nays. It went at once to the Senate, where it was killed the same afternoon by a vote of 4 yeas to 12 nays.

In New York, a municipal suffrage bill came to a vote in the Assembly, March 25, but lacked nine votes of the majority of all the members elected, which the State Constitution requires.

In Nevada, a Constitutional amendment conferring suffrage upon women was voted down in the Legislature.

In Nebraska, a municipal suffrage bill was introduced, but was pronounced unconstitutional by the Judiciary Committee of the House. Being introduced again, in a modified form, it was indefinitely postponed.

In Ohio, two suffrage propositions were earnestly pressed upon the Legislature. The first, a municipal suffrage bill, was defeated January 18, the affirmative vote falling nineteen short of the majority of all the members, required by the Constitution. The second proposition, an amendment striking the word "male" from the Constitution, lacked sixteen votes in the House, and three in the Senate, of the three fifths required by the Constitution.

A FLUCTUATING FACTOR.

The advocates of woman suffrage will do well not to lay too much emphasis upon the women's vote for School Committee in Boston. Whatever may be thought of the arguments by which the women have been rallied, or the immediate results which their votes have helped to accomplish, the school elections of 1888 and 1889 furnish strong confirmation of the position of those who have objected to woman suffrage on the ground that the vote of women would be a fluctuating and emotional factor in politics. This is precisely what the results show it to be. The questions which relate to the administration of the schools, the character and fidelity of the teachers, and the welfare of the children, were just as important in 1882, for example, as in 1888. Yet in the former year only 498 women in Boston thought it worth while to vote, while in 1888 there were 19,490 who went to the polls. Why was the women's vote of 1882 swollen fortyfold in 1888? Simply because the women were appealed to by religious and emotional considerations, and were aroused by issues which, whether necessary or not at that time, no prudent or patriotic American would wish to become a staple of politics. And why was it that the registration and vote of women in 1889 fell off nearly one half? Simply because the emotional issues of the preceding year were less operative.

The fluctuating character of the women's vote becomes clearly apparent on a comparison of the official figures. We give the following, except the figures for 1889, from the returns transmitted to the Legislature by the Secretary of the Commonwealth: —

Year.	Women Registered.	Women Voting.
1881	748	640
1882	567	498
1883	701	650
1884	1,119	1,026
1885	2,238	2,062
1886	1,193	878
1887	837	725
1888	20,252	19,490
1889	10,589	10,051

The Boston Herald of November 28, 1889, commenting upon the registration of women, which had just closed, said editorially: —

"If women are to take part in municipal contests for members of the school board or for other elective officers, they must do so when urged by a calm sense of duty, and not when spurred to the polls by the clamors and appeals of excited partisans. If it is only under such exceptional circumstances that a full female vote can be depended upon, then we should say that it was highly questionable whether any extension of female suffrage was desirable. We should have, under such circumstances, periodical semi-revolutions. Eternal vigilance is said to be the price of liberty, and that vigilance compels the public-spirited citizen to do his duty at the polls whenever an election takes place. But if, in a municipal, state, or national election, 3,000 or 4,000 women vote at one election, and 30,000 or 40,000 at another, our government, so far as it could be controlled by this vote, would be carried on upon the explosive principle — that is, government matters would be permitted to drift from bad to worse until something approaching a revolutionary crisis was reached, and then for one year we should have a complete turnover, to be followed by several years of popular apathy until another crisis occurred."

Certainly a little reflection upon the figures which we have quoted confirms this view, all the more when it is noticed that when once before, in 1885, there was a spurt of interest in school suffrage, the vote declined more than one half the succeeding year, as was the case in 1889.

A FATAL ADMISSION.

That was a fatal admission which was made last winter, by the Rev. Henry Blanchard, President of the Maine Woman's Suffrage Association, when, over his own signature, in The Portland Press, he said: "I tell the gentlemen of the Legislature that the majority of women are opposed to woman suffrage." In the light of this admission, the suffrage movement can no longer be represented, as in the past, as an attempt to secure for women a coveted privilege. It is disclosed as a movement upon the part of a confessed minority of the sex to force upon the great majority a responsibility which they do not desire, but from which they shrink with a strong repugnance based on their conviction that it is unnecessary and unwise.

This point being conceded, and it is as true in Massachusetts or any other State as it is in Maine, what becomes of the pretence of the suffragists that when they ask for the ballot for women they voice the desire of the sex? By their own confession, it is not woman as a sex, but a clamorous minority of women whom they represent. This is quite a different thing, and the distinction ought to find a place in woman suffrage oratory.

It follows also from Mr. Blanchard's admission that unless legislators are prepared to ignore in this matter the fundamental principle of the American system, that the will of the majority shall control, they cannot consistently force the ballot upon women when the large majority of the sex not only do not ask for it, but are averse to having the burden placed upon them.

SUFFRAGE IN THE NEW STATES.

In South Dakota, under the Constitution, the Legislature is required to submit a woman suffrage amendment to the people. The vote will be taken in November next, and an active campaign is already in progress. In North Dakota, the suffragists endeavored to persuade the Constitutional Convention to remit the whole question to the Legislature, under which plan it would have been possible at any time to obtain full woman suffrage by simple Act of Legislature. This plan was agreed to by the Convention, July 31. The next day, however, the vote was reconsidered, and an amendment adopted, requiring a vote of the people to ratify any act of the Legislature conferring suffrage upon women. In the Montana Convention, propositions to empower the Legislature to confer the suffrage upon women, to submit the question to the vote of the people every four years, and to submit a separate suffrage article at the same time with the Constitution, were successively voted down, the first and third, however, by a tie vote.

The Constitutions of North and South Dakota and Washington confer school suffrage upon women: and the Constitution of Montana contains this provision:

"Upon all questions submitted to the vote of the taxpayers of the state, or any political division thereof, women who are taxpayers and possessed of the qualifications for the right of suffrage required of men by this Constitution, shall equally with men have the right to vote."